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Master of the Battlefield

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and biography that will remain a classic in its field.

RAYMOND G. O'CONNOR
Lieutenant (j.g.), US Navy (Ret.)

Hamilton, Nigel. *Master of the Battlefield: Monty's War Years 1942-1944*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1983. 863pp. \$25.95

Nigel Hamilton's middle volume of his monumental three-volume biography of Montgomery covers the period 1942-1944, beginning with Alamein and ending with victory in the Battle of Normandy. It is of special interest to Americans because it was during this period that Monty was first thrown into close contact with Patton, Bradley, Eisenhower, and other Americans. In Normandy, Monty had serious disagreements with Ike and the others over basic strategic questions. This led to thriving controversies over what Monty did or did not say, and what he did or did not intend to do. In dealing with these controversies, Hamilton takes Monty's point of view. He agrees with Monty on every issue, indeed sometimes claiming more for Monty's genius than even Monty himself would claim. The one criticism Hamilton has of Monty is that Monty simply could not or would not adjust himself to his role, or take some pains to be aware of the pressures on his superior, Eisenhower.

What will be of most interest to serving officers, however, is not Hamilton's defense of Monty on this or that disagreement, but rather Hamilton's admirable discussions of

Monty on the subject of command. Monty had a fine mind, and he had used his powers of thought to concentrate on the problem of command. He had tested his ideas in battle, at almost every level of command. He knew what he was talking about, and can be read with great profit today by those put into command situations.

Although Eisenhower never benefited from it, in certain areas Monty did have broadness of mind. Far more than Patton or indeed most other fighting generals, Monty was sensitive to the problem of public morale. In the spring of 1944, for example, during the preparations for Overlord, Monty took the time to visit the factories where the war goods were being manufactured. He would make a speech, urging the workers to one last great effort, to give his boys the tools with which to win the war. Then he would break off and chat informally with the workers. He was tremendously popular, a man who cultivated his own image, vain, difficult—but a superb showman and politician as well as general. He really did do wonders for British morale. It is one of Hamilton's virtues that he brings this out.

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